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the faith of an individual so long as he refrains from expressing his faith in action." Again in maintaining the thesis that there is no such thing as a universal moral law applicable to States, Treitschke fell foul of the objection that without some kind of moral standard no progress is conceivable. This difficulty he felt to be real, but he disposed of it in the most summary way. "Here," he declared, "conscience has the last word. The craving of the individual conscience for individual perfection leads to the conviction that humanity as a whole experiences the same craving for perfection. And this proof arrived at by practical reasoning is the only one of any importance." Insisting strenuously that the ideal of a world State embracing all humanity is unnatural and repulsive, he gave his argument, as it were, a theological turn that seems to do away with moral objections to State egoism. "It would be impossible to realize all that is meant by civilization in any single State. . . . The rays of divine light reveal themselves in broken form in different peoples, each of whom manifests a new shape and a new conception of Godhead." The State may become a *Culturstaat*, but, primarily, *der Staat ist Macht*; it may be more than this, but this at least it must be. The State must indeed respect public opinion, the moral sense of the world; yet self-preservation is not only its chief, but also its highest duty. Finally Treitschke's discussion of the right of a subject to resist commits him to the position that the majority, or at any rate the stronger party, may do what it would be wrong for the individual to attempt.

Doubtless Treitschke wrote with a sincere zeal for truth, strong in the thought that it is the highest morality to discard false moral concepts for truth's sake, and by no means desirous, like Nietzsche, of turning the morals of the world upside down. Nevertheless, as a political philosopher he is far from completely convincing, and it is not easy to believe that his views would have obtained wide acceptance but for the fact that they embodied German aspirations and expanded with them. As a critic he is often penetrating, and his analyses of the ideas of liberty, of party government, of nationalism, are instructive. The extracts which Mr. Davis has made from Treitschke's *Deutsche Geschichte im Neunzehnten Jahrhundert* consist of pungent criticisms of English institutions, policies, and men, showing how similar in letter and spirit were the German beliefs about England in 1879 and in 1914, and emphasizing in a striking manner the conviction that since 1832 England has been a decadent nation.

Mr. Davis's comments are pointed, but moderate in tone; they are made in the unimpassioned spirit of pure scholarship.

THE CONGO AND OTHER POEMS. By VACHEL LINDSAY. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1914.

The title-poem of Mr. Lindsay's new book of verse belongs to a group of singular metrical compositions which are intended, the

author tells us, to be read aloud or chanted. "The Congo: A Study of the Negro Race," begins thus:

Fat, black bucks in a wine-barrel room,
Barrel-house kings, with feet unstable,
Sagged and reeled and pounded on the table,
Pounded on the table,
Beat an empty barrel with the handle of a broom,
Hard as they were able,
Boom, boom, BOOM
With a silk umbrella and the handle of a broom,
Boomlay, boomlay, boomlay, BOOM.
THEN I had religion. THEN I had a vision.
I could not turn from their revel in derision.
THEN I SAW THE CONGO, CREEPING THROUGH THE BLACK,
CUTTING THROUGH THE FOREST WITH A GOLDEN TRACK.

If one's conventional tastes are repelled by a certain unbeautifulness of language and a seeming fatuity in lines such as this—if, indeed, the whole composition strikes one as an effort to combine the aims of impressionism with the methods of the nursery rhyme—one is to remember that poetry such as this is to be read aloud or chanted—and thereby hangs a tale. Mr. Lindsay would fain restore the "primitive singing of poetry." For an explanation of just what this means we are referred to a passage in Prof. Edward Bliss Reed's volume on *The English Lyric*. "With the Greeks," writes Professor Reed, "song was an all-embracing term. It included the crooning of the nurse to the child, . . . the half-sung chant of the mower or the sailor, . . . the formal ode sung by the poet. In all Greek lyrics, even in the choral odes, music was the handmaid of verse. . . . The poet himself composed the accompaniment. Euripides was censured because Iophon assisted him in the musical setting of some of his dramas." Surely one is predisposed to favor any effort toward making poetry a more popular, a more vital thing; for the sake of so good a result, one is prepared even to swallow a rather large mouthful of seeming absurdity. The invitation, too, to return to primitive things, for the sake of their freshness and spontaneity, is always persuasive. One may venture to remark, however, that the tendency to go "back to nature" is liable to lead to some rather strange extravagances: it is anti-evolutionary; it is, to use a now somewhat discredited term, "atavistic." Through all the ages poetry, singing, and speechifying have tended to differentiate themselves and to develop each in its own way, with the result that while some modern verse has a most exquisite singing quality, it is for the most part quite unfitted for being set to music, and in most cases gains comparatively little in effect—loses, indeed, something of its intimacy and warmth—through being read aloud. Proper appreciation of Mr. Lindsay's experiments in the restoration of primitive singing seems to require of us that we take our poetic enjoyment in somewhat the same manner as do drum-beating savages.

But to consider thus is perhaps to consider too curiously. One is not so much frightened by seeming "atavism" as by the threat to impose upon us a new form of elocution. It is the feeling that with us the primitive singing of verse would become merely a drawing-room amusement, unworthy of the dignity of poetry, that strikes one cold. One's instinct protests that the thing could never be really primitive or really spontaneous; that it would simply result in a more violent phase of that form of entertainment which is neither good singing nor good acting nor good reading. Incidentally, it may be said that the chanter of Mr. Lindsay's verses must, like Cicero's orator, have good lungs. He must be able to sing or declaim "with the heavy buzzing base of fire-engines pumping"; to speak "with snapping explosiveness"; to imitate the wind in the chimney; to roar "like a train-caller in a Union Depot." He must also have a mind of some subtlety; he must know what is meant by a "philosophic pause and how to express himself on occasion with "great deliberation and ghostliness."

Among the "other poems" of the Congo volume there are many verses of the ordinary not-to-be-read-aloud kind. These are, in general, impressionistic, sometimes very striking in imagery, almost always colorful, and, in general, such as many a reader may take great joy in. The opening lines of "A Rhyme about an Electrical Advertising Sign" may be quoted as illustrating the poet's power of vivid realization and also his note of actuality:

I look on the specious electrical light,
Blatant, mechanical, crawling, and white,
Wickedly red or malignantly green
Like the beads of a young Senegambian queen,
Showing, while millions of souls hurry on,
The virtues of collars from sunset till dawn,
By dart or by tumble of whirl within whirl,
Starting new fads for the shame-weary girl,
By maggoty motions in sickening line
Proclaiming a hat or a soup or a wine,
While there far above the steep cliffs of the street
The stars sing a message illusive and sweet.

It is disappointing that the poet who wrote this vivid passage should content himself with the strident commonplace of such effusions as the one entitled "Who Knows?" in which Mr. Lindsay makes rhetorical inquiries about the alleged madness of certain European kings. He asks:

Is Europe, then, to be their sprawling place?
Their madhouse, till it turns the wide world's bane?
Their place of maudlin slaving conference
Till every far-off farmstead goes insane?

In general, those poems of Mr. Lindsay's that have reference to the European war are not his best.